



A
Conference
with a Lady
about choice
of
Religion.

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By s^r Kenh: Digby





ADAME,

My being conscious
to my selfe how confused-
ly and intricately , I
haue deliuered my con-
ceptions vnto your lady-
shippe vpon the seuerall
occasions of discourse we
haue had together concer-
ning that important sub-
iect of what faith and reli-
giō is the true one to bring
vs to eternall happinesse
(wherein your Ladyshipp

A ij

is so wisely and worthily
inquisitiue and sollicitous)
hath begotten this follow-
ing writing; in the which
I will, as nere as I can,
summe vp the heads of
those cōsiderations I haue
sometimes discussed vnto
you in conuersation. And
I will briefly and barely
lay them before you with-
out any long enlargement
vpon them; as haueing a
better opinion of the re-
flections that your Lady-
shipps great vnderstanding
and strong reasoning soule
will by your selfe make
vpon the naked subiect
sincerely proposed, then
of any commentary I can

5
frame vpon it. And indeed
such discourses as these,
are deeper looked into, whē
they are pōdered by a pru-
dentiall iudgement, then
when they are examined
by scientificall specula-
tions.

But with your leaue I
shall take the matter a
little higher then where
the chiefe difficulty see-
meth to be, at which your
Ladyshipp sticketh con-
ceiuing that if we begin at
theroote and proceede on
steppe by steppe, we shall
find our search the easier,
and the securer, and our
assent to the conclusions
we shall collect, wil be the

A iij

more firme and vigorous.

We will therefore begin with considering why faith and Religion is needfull to a man, before we determine the meanes how to find out the right faith: for that being once settled in the vnderstanding, we shall presently without further dispute reiect what Religio soeuer is but proposed, that hath not those proprieties which are required to bring that to passe, that Religion in its owne nature aymeth at. And this must be done by taking a suruey of some of the operations of a human soule, and of the impres-

sions made in it by the objects it is conuersant withall,

1. Your Ladyshipp may be pleased the to consider in the first place. That it is by nature ingrafted in the soules of all mankinde to desire beatitude. (By which word I meane an intire, perfect, and secure fruition of all such objects as one hath vehement affections vnto, without mixture of any thing one hath auersion from.) For the soule haueing a perpetuall actiuity in it, must necessarily haue something to entertaine it selfe about: and according to the two

chiefe powers of it (which are the vnderstanding and the will) it employeth it selfe, first in the search and inuestigatio of what is true and good ; and then, according to the iudgement it maketh of it, the will followeth and with affectiōs graspeth at it, which if it happen to seize vpon, the soule is at content and at rest: but if it misse, it is vnquiet, and laboureth with all vehemence to compassse it : and if any thing happen that is repugnant to the nature of it, it vseth all industry and efficacious meanes to overcome and banish it: so that all the ac-

tions and motions of it,
tend to gaine contentment
and beatitude.

2. In the next place you
may please to consider that
this full beatitude which
the soule thirsteth after,
cannot be enioyed in this
life. For it is apparent, that
intellectuall goods, as
sciēce, contemplation and
fruition of spirituall ob-
iects and contentments, in
theire owne nature are the
chiefe goods of the soule,
and affect her much more
strongly and violently thē
corporall and sensuall ones
can doe: for they are more
agreeable to her nature, and
therefore moue her more

efficaciously when they
 are duely relished. But
 such intellectuall goods
 cannot be perfectly relis-
 hed and inioyed as long as
 the soule is immerfed in
 the body, by reason that
 the sensuall appetite ma-
 keth continuall warr a-
 gainst the rationall part of
 the soule; and in most men
 mastereth it, and in the
 perfectest, this earthly ha-
 bitation doth loe drawe
 downe and clogge and
 benumme the noble inha-
 bitant of it (which would
 allwayes busie it selfe in
 sublime contemplations)
 as it may be sayd to be but
 in a iayle whiles it resideth

heere. And experience cōfirmeth vnto vs, that the sparkes of knowledge we gaine heere are not pure; but haue the nature of salt water, that increaseth the thirst in them who drinke most of it; and we swallowe the purest streames like men in a dropsie, who the more they drinke are still the greedier of more. Therefore to haue this greedinesse of knowing satisfied, and to exercise the powers of our soule in the pure and abstracted contemplation of truth, and in the sincere fruition of spirituall objects, we must haue patience vntill

she arriue vnto an other
 state of life, wherein being
 separated from all corpor-
 all feces , impediments,
 and contradictions , she
 may wholly giue herselfe
 vp to that which is her
 naturall operation , and
 from whence resulteth her
 true and perfect delight.
 Besides , euen they who
 haue attayned to the grea-
 test blessings (both inward
 and outward) that this
 world can afforde, yet are
 farr from being complete-
 ly happy : for that state ad-
 mitteth noe mixture of the
 contrary , which who was
 euer yet free from, were
 his fortune neuer so spe-

cions? The very feare of loosing them, that must allwayes necessarily accompany these blessings, is such a spoonefull of gall to make their whole draught bitter, as that alone, must needes take of the edge and vigour of the contentment that else they might enjoy. How little can any man relish the obiects of delight which with neuer so great affluence beset him roundabout, when he knoweth a sharpe and heauy sword hangesh by a slender thread ouer his head, and at length must fall, and euer after seuer

him from them ? A litle
 distemper, an accidentall
 feauer, and ill mingled
 draught (such a one as the
 miracle of witt and lear-
 ning Lucretius mett with-
 all) is enough to turne the
 braines of the wisest man
 that is, and in a few houres
 to blott out all these no-
 tions he hath bin all his
 life labouring to possesse
 himselfe of, and to render
 him of a more abiect, and
 despicable condition then
 the meanest wretch liuing
 that hath but the common
 vse of reason. The Genius
 that presideth ouer hu-
 man affaires, delighteth in
 perpetuall changes and

variation of mēs fortunes,
 so that he who late late en-
 throned in greatest digni-
 ty, is all of a suddaine pre-
 cipitated head - long vnto
 a condition most opposite
 therunto : he that but yef-
 terday had all his ioyes en-
 larged and swelled vp to
 their full height by the
 communication of a per-
 fect and entire friend
 (without which can there
 by any true ioye?) hath to
 day lost the comfort of
 all that the world can af-
 ford him by the irrecoue-
 rable losse of that one
 friend. In a word , death
 growing dayly vpon him,
 and encroaching vpon his

outworks, and by houres reducing him into a narrower circle, at leingth seizeth vpon himselfe and maketh an eternall diuorce betweene him and what was dearest to him heere.

3. Our next consideration then shall be to discouer what will result out of our swifte passadge through this vayle of miseries, and what impressions we shall carry with vs out of this pilgrimage; since we cannot suspect it is a iourney assigned vs in vaine, being the ordinary and naturall course prescribed by the wise author of nature to all
man-

mankinde, and the ineu-
table through-fare for eue-
ry man in particular. Ther-
fore to proceed on in this
methode, our third con-
clusion shall be, that what
soever iudgemēt the soule
once frameth in this life,
that iudgement and that
affection will perpetually
remaine in the soule, vn-
lesse some contrary im-
pression be made in it to
blot it out; which only
hath power to expell any
former one. For iudge-
ments and affections are
caused in a man by the im-
pression that the objects
make in his soule: and all
that any agent aymeth at

in any operation whatsoever (be it neuer so forcible in action) is but to produce a resemblance of it selfe in the subiect it worketh vpon; and therefore it excludeth nothing that it findeth formerly there (which in our case is the soule) vlesse it be some such impression as is incompatible with what it intendeth to effect there; or that the subiect is not large enough, both to retayne the old and receaue the new; in which case the first must be blotted out to make roome for the latter. But of iudgements and affections, none are in-

cōpatible to one another,
 but those that are directly
 opposite to one another by
 contradiction : Therefore
 only such haue power to
 expell one another ; and
 all that are not such, are
 immediatly vnited to the
 very substāce of the soule,
 which hauing an infinite
 capacity , it can neuer be
 filled by any limited ob-
 iects whatsoeuer : so that
 they alwayes reside in the
 soule, although they doe
 not at all tymes appeare in
 outward act ; which pro-
 ceedeth from hence, that
 new and other images are
 by the fantasie represented
 to the soule, and she see-

meth to busy herselfe onely about what she findeth there. which being but one distinct Image at a tyme (for corporall organs haue limited comprehensions, and are quickly filled with corporall species) she ther-upon seemeth to exercise but one iudgement, or but one affectiō at a tyme. But as soone as the soule shall be released out of the body (which is like a darke prison to wall it in) then she will at one and the same instant actually knowe and loue all those things she knewe, and loued in the body; with onely this difference, that her

knowledges will then be
 much more distinct and
 perfect, and her affe-
 ctions much more ve-
 hement then they were
 in this life, by reason that
 her coniunction heere
 with resistant matter was a
 burden, and a clogge vnto
 her, and hindered the acti-
 uitie and force of her ope-
 rations. The difference of
 these states, may in some
 measure be illustrated by a
 grosse and materiall exāple:
 Represent vnto your selfe
 a man walled vp in a darke
 tower, that is so close as
 noe ayre nor light can
 come into it, excepting
 only at one little hole, and

that hole too affordeth no cleare and free passage to the sight, but hath a thick and muddy glasse before it. Now if this man would looke vpon any of the objects that are about this tower, he must gett them to be placed ouer against that hole, vnto which he must lay his eye; and then, he can discern but one at a time, and that but dimly nether, and if he will see seuerall bodies, it must be by so many seuerall iterated actes as they are in number. But suppose some Earthquake or exteriour violence to breake a sunder and throwe downe to

the ground the wals of this tower, leauing the man vntouched and vnhurt; then at one instant, and with one cast of his eyes, he beholdeth distinctly, clearly, and at ease, all those seuerall objects that with so much labour and tyme he tooke but a mistakinge sursey of before.

4. The fourth consideration shall be, that after the first instant wherein the soule is separated from the body, she is then in her nature no longer subiect or liable to any new impression mutatio or chāge whatsoeuer. For that which should cause any such ef-

fect, must be either a materiall or a spirituall agent :
 But a materiall one cannot worke vpon it, for that requireth quantitie in the patient , whereby it may be applyed unto it to exercise its operation vpon it: Nor cā any spirituall agēt cause any succession of new alteration ; But all that spirits worke one vpon another is done at once and at one instant : which we shall discern the clearer by examining the reason why there is succession and tyme taken vp in the alterations that are wrought amongst materiall things, for in them, by reason of

their quantity that causeth
an extention and distance
of the parts, the agent, all-
though it haue neuer so
much disposition and effi-
cacy to worke, must haue
his seuerall parts applyed
to the seuerall parts of the
patient by locall motion;
which requireth tyme for
the performance thereof.
And besides, even in the
agent it selfe, the grosse-
nesse and heauinesse of the
matter giueth an allay and
is a clogge to the actiuity
of the forme, and as it
were pulleth it backe
whiles it is in action. But
this is not so in spirituall
substances, and therefore

we may conclude that among them in the same instant that the agent is disposed to worke, the action is performed, for on his part there is nothing to retarde it, nor is there required any locall motion which should take vp tyme; and likewise by the same reason, in the very instant that the patient is disposed to receiue any impression, it is wrought in it: And thus, although there were neuer so many agents, and euery one of them to performe neuer so many actions, they would be all done, and ended in one and the same instant.

5. The next consideration shall be, that those persons who in this world had strong and predominant affections to sensible and materiall objects; and dyed in that state; shall be eternally miserable in the next, for by what we haue sayed, it appeareth that those affections will eternally remaine in the soule; and that after the separation of it from the body, they can neuer be blotted out of it, or changed; And the affections of a separated soule are much more ardent and vehement then whiles it is in the body. But it is impossible they

should euer attayne in that state to the frutiō of what they so violently couet and loue, and yet for its sake they neglect all other goods whatsoeuer that they might haue, whose beauty and excellēcy, notwithstanding they plainly discernē : they cannot choose therfore but excrete themselues for their fondly misplaced (yet thē eternally necessary) affections, and pine away (if so I may say) with perpetuall anguish and despaire of what they so impatiently, and enragedly desire and ueuer can obtayne.

6. The sixt considera-

tion shall be, that to be happy in the next life, one must not settle their predominant affections vpon any creature whatsoeuer, or any good that we can naturally attayne to the knowledge of in this life. For what naturall good soeuer we loue or enioy here, we must by death be diuorced from, and (as we haue sayd before) that separation will cause perpetuall sorrow, because the affections remaine vnchāgeable. And although we should place our felicity in naturall knowledge or any other intellectuall good whatsoeuer, yet that

cannot satisfy the desires and fill the capacity of the soule, though it be neuer so perfectly enjoyed: for they are infinite; and this can be collected but out of particular objects (for the whole created vniuerse is but so) and therefore they hold no proportion together; but the soule haueing nothing else to fill it withall, although it should not be tormented with the former mentioned corrosiues of preposterous affections, yet it cannot be at rest and quiet, and the thirst of it satisfied by that dropp of water in

comparifon of the vehement ardor of it.

And thus it followeth, that ether man was not created for a determinate end, and for a ftate conuenient for his nature, and able to fatisfie the originall appetences of his foule; or at the leaft, no mā can by naturall meanes arriue to the end and period of happineffe.

7. But now to proccede in the purfuance of this method of reasoning, and to follow hence forward the conduct of a supernaturall guide, ſince nature quitteth vs here, haucing lead vs on as long as ſhe was able

to see; we may in the sequent place consider that God when he created man did not assigne him to remaine in the state of pure nature, but did out of his goodnesse and liberality conferre something vpon him that exceeded the sphere of his nature. For else, the first part of the precedent consequence would follow; which were not only impious, but absurd to say, to whosoever considereth the infinite goodnesse, wisdom and omnipotency of God. For as heate being essentiall to fire, cannot but produce heate in whatsoever it hath

application vnto; so God being in his owne essence goodnesse it selfe, cannot chuse but doe vnto whatsoever proceedeth from him, all that good which the nature of it is capable of; (whether by naturall or supernaturall meanes) and his wisdom can readily contriue the meanes to bring that to passe which his goodnesse disposeth him to doe; And his omnipotency as easily acteth what his other two attributes haue projected; so that there wanting an infinite object to satisfy the infinite capacity of the soule, and without which

she must be eternally miserable; it remayneth, that he who gaue that capacity, must allso afforde the obiect, and assigne meanes how to compasse and gaine it. All which we haue already proued is out of the reach of nature to discern: and therefore it followeth of consequence, that the author of nature must endowe man with some supernaturall giftes, if he be in a fit disposition to receaue them which may bring him to the supernaturall end he was created for.

8 Our eight conclusion shall be that of these super-

naturall giftes , the first
 and the ground and foun-
 dation of all the rest , is
 faith. For we haue already
 determined that we can-
 not by any naturall meanes
 attaine to the knowledge
 of any obieſt that may ren-
 der vs completely happy
 in the next life ; And yet
 ſuch knowledge muſt be
 had , to the end that we
 may direct our actionsto
 gaine the fruition of that
 obieſt. Therefore there is
 no way left to compaſſe
 this , but by the in-
 ſtructions and discipline of
 ſome Maſter whole good-
 neſſe and knowledge we
 can no wayes doubt of ; by

which two perfections in him, we may be secure that he nether can be deceaued himselfe, nor will deceaue vs. Now the doctrine that such a Master shall teach for such an ende, we call faith.

9. In the ninth place we must determine that this Master must be God and man. For first by our discourse vpon naturall principles, we haue proued, that to auoide misery in the next life, we must deny our senses the content and satisfaction that they naturally desire in corporall things, and that we must withdrawe our affections from all materiall objects:

And next we haue collected that the obiekt which we must know and loue to be happy, doth exceede the reach and view of any created vnderstanding to discern: Therefore we may safely conclude that this doctrine ought to be deliuered vnto vs originally by God himselfe. For after the first branch, which is of withdrawing our affections from sensible goods; although out of naturall principles that doctrine is to be collected, yet that is not a sufficient meanes to settle mankinde in generally in the beliefe of it: For the discourse that pro-

ueth it, is such an abstracted one, as very few are capable of it, being that it requireth both a mature age to be able to reason so (before which tyme many dye) and likewise strong and vigorous powers of the vnderstanding which we see more doe want then are indowed withall : And, besides, of those that haue both yeares and capacity to wielde such thoughts, there are so few that are not in a manner forced away from such interior recollections by their particular vacations and the naturall necessities they are obliged vnto ; as

to beate it out by themselves is not a sufficient meanes to serue mankind in this case. And to thinke that those few who haueing great partes, may with much labour haue attayned to the knowledge therof, should instruct others that are simpler and are taken vp by other imployments and courses of life, were very irrationall; since no man, be he neuer so wise, is such but may be deceiued; and then, how can it be expected that another man should without sensible demonstration belieue his single word in a matter so cōtrary to sense,

and wherein he must forgoe so great contentments and present vtility?

And for the other branch, which is in the instructing mankinde concerning the right obiekt that he is to know and loue to be happy, that is altogether out of the reache of any man whatsoeuer by himselfe to discover; and therefore much lesse can he in his owne name instruct others therein: And if any man should goe about to doe so, and to introduce a new doctrine of faith not formerly heard of, drawing the arguments for confirmation therof onely out

of his owne ratiocination and discourse ; that alone , were enough to conuince him of falsehoode ; since he should thereby vnder-take to know what were impossible for him of himselfe to attayne to the knowledge of.

Therefore it is necessary that the author of the doctrine we must believe , the instructor of the actions we must performe ; and the promiser of the happiness we may hope for , be God himselfe ; who onely knoweth of himselfe what is sayed in matters of these natures , and who onely is nether liable to be decei-

ued, nor can deceiue others; as being the prime verity it selfe.

But because the weaknesse of our intellectuall nature is such, whiles we remaine here in our earthly habitations, imprisoned in our houses of clay, as we cannot lift vp our heavy and drowisie eyes, and steddily fixe our dimme sight vpon the dazeling and indeed inuisible Deity, nor entertaine an immediate communication with him (like the childrē of Israel, who desired that Moses, not God might speake vnto them) it was necessary that God himselfe should def-

pend to some corporall substance that might be more familiar and lesse dazeling vnto vs; And none was so conuenient as humane nature, to the end that he might not onely conuerse freely and familiarly with vs, and so in a gentle and a sweete manner teach vs what we should doe; but also preach vnto vs by his example, and himselfe be our leader in the way that he instructed vs to take. The conclusion then of this discourse, is, that it was necessary, Christ, God and man, should come into the world to teach vs what to

believe and what to doe.

10. The tenth conclusion shall be, that those vnto whom Christ did immediatly preach this faith, and vnto whome he gaue commission to preach it vnto others and spread it through the world, after he ascended to heauen; ought to be believed as firmly as he himielfe. The reason of this assertion is, that their doctrine, though it be deliuered by secondary mouthes, yet it proceedeth from the same fountaine: which is God himielfe, that is the prime verity, and cannot deceiue,

nor be deceiued. But all the difficulty here in is, to know who had this immediate commission from Christ, and by what seale we should discerne it to haue bin no forged one. The solution of this ariseth out of the same argument which proueth that Christ himselfe was God, and that the doctrine he taught was true and diuine; which is, the miracles and workes he did, exceeding the power of nature, and that could be effected by none but by God himselfe: for he being truth it selfe, cannot by any action immediately proceeding from

him, witnesse and confirme à falsehoode : In like manner the Apostles doing such admirable workes and miracles as nether by nature nor by art magicke could be brought to passe, that must necessarily inferre God himselfe cooperated with them to iustifie what they sayd; it is euident that their doctrine (which was not their owne, but receaued from Christ) must be true and Diuine.

II. The eleauenth conclusion shall be, that this faith thus taught by Christ and propagated by the Apostles and necessary to

mankinde to belieue (as well that part of it which is written, as the whole which is not) dependeth intrinsecally vpon the testimony of the Catholike Church; which is ordained to conserue and deliuer it from age to age. (By which Catholike Church, I meane the congregation of the faithfull that is spread through-out the whole world) for we haue proued before, that the way to the true faith ought to be open and playne to all men, of all abilities, and in all ages, that haue a desire to embrace it: and this cannot be but ether

by the immediate preaching of Christ; or else by the information (ether in writing or by word of mouth) of them that learned it from him, and their deliuering it ouer to others, and so from hand to hand vntill any particular tyme you will pitch vpon. But from Christs owne mouth, none could haue it but those who liued in the age when he did, therefore there remaineth no other meanes to haue it deriued downe to after; ages then by this deliuey ouer from hand to hand of the whole congregation of fathers or elders dispersed throughout
throughout

throughout the world, to the whole congregation of sonnes or youngers; which course of deducing faith from Christ we call tradition, so that this conclusion proueth that the Church is the conseruer both of the whole doctrine of faith necessary for saluation, and likewise of the diuine writ dictated by the Holy Ghost, and written by the Prophetes, Euangelists and Apostles, which we are also bound to belieue. And the same assent that we are to giue to the truth of Sctiptures (that is to say, that the Sctiptures we haue are

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true Scriptures) the very same we are to giue to other articles of faith proposed vnto vs by the Church : for they alike depend of the same authority; which is the veracity of the Church proposing and deliuering the vnto vs to be belicued. And we may as well doubt that the Church hath corrupted the Scriptures, as that she hath corrupted any article of faith.

12. The twelue th conclusion shall be that into the Catholike Church noe false doctrine in any age can be admitted or creepe in, that is to say,

no false proposition whatsoever can ever be received and embraced by the Catholike Church as a proposition of faith. For whatsoever the Church beleeueth as a proposition of faith, is vpon this ground, that Christ taught it as such vnto the Church he planted himselfe, and so it left it in truste to be by it deliuered ouer to the next age. And the reason why the present Church belieueth any proposition to be of faith, is because the immediate preceeding Church, of the age before, deliuered it as such. And so you may driue it on frō

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age to age vntill you
come to the Apostles and
Christ. Therefore to haue
any false proposition of
faith admitted into the
Church in any age, doth
Suppose that all they of
that age must vnanimous-
ly conspire to deceiue
their children and youn-
gers, telling them that
they were taught by their
fathers to belieue, as of
faith, some proposition
which indeed they were
not. Which being impossi-
ble (as it will euidently
appeare to any prudent
person that shall reasona-
bly ponder the matter)
that so many men spread

throughout the whole world, so different in their particular interests and endes, and of such various dispositions and natures, should all agree together in the forgery of any precise lye; it is impossible that any false doctrine should creepe into the Church.

But because the force of this argument may peradventure not appeare at the first sight to your Ladyshipp, that happily hath not had much occasion to make deepe reflection vpon the certainty that must needs be in the asseueration of any history of matter of fact subiect to

the sense, which shall be made by a great company of men so distant from one another, and of such different interests and affections as they cannot conspire together in the forgery of a falsehood; But that you may happily thinke, since any one man is lyable to be deceiued, or out of some indirect end may be iuduced to deceiue another, it is also possible that a whole multitude of men (be it neuer so great) consisting of particular men, may allso deceiue or be deceiued: I will therefore for a further declaration of this matter,

propose for the thirteenth Conclusion , that sayth thus deliuered, is absolutely more certaine and infallible then any naturall science whatsoever. And yet sciences are so certaine(I meane such as depend of experience and demonstration) as he were not a rationall man that should refuse his assent vnto them : And consequently he would incurre the like censure that should not yield credēce to faith, in this manner proposed vnto him. In the prooffe of this conclusion I must vse two wordes appropriated to philosophy (to wit

matter and forme) which is contrary to my intention at the first, which was to abstaine from all termes of artificiall learning, and make onely a familiar discourse that should require no precedent helpe of study, but onely a cleere and strong iudgement (such as yours is) to weigh the strength of the reasons: Butt I am the lesse scrupulous to auoide these words, because I know your La: vnderstandeth what is meant by them; and they haue often occurred in our discourses. To come then to the examination

of this cōclusiō, I say, that
faith dependeth on these
two propositions ; first,
that whatsoeuer God
sayth is true ; Next , that
God sayd this (whatso-
euer it be) that is deliuered
thus by the tradition of
the Church. For the for-
mer of these assertions,
there is noe doubt made
by any side ; since all a-
gree that God being the
prime verity , whatsoeuer
proceedeth immediatly frō
him must necessarily be
more infallible then any
collections made from
creatures ether by expe-
rience or ratiocination of
men. The second assertion

I shall allso proue to be more infallible then any such collections; in this manner. Among materiall things, that are subiect to tyme and place, and are here in the sphere of contraries, and of action and passion, although the lawes that gouerne them are in the generall certaine (else no science could be acquired of them) yet in the particular they are subiect to contingency and defection from those lawes; which contingency doth proceed from the resistance of the matter, and the contagion and leprosy (if so I may say).

that the matter infecteth the forme withall; which, were it not for that, would allwayes constantly worke the same effect in all occasions : and according as the forme hath in particular more or lesse predominance ouer the matter, the contingency and defect in them from the true nature of that body considered in his perfection, is the greater or the lesser. Lett vs illustrate this by an example : According to the ordinary doctrine of Philosophers in the Schooles, we collect by many particular experiences, that the nature of fire proceedinge

from the forme of it , is to ascend ; and of them we frame a generall doctrine that fire is the lightest of all the elements , and that his naturall place is aboue them all : yet we see that when the forme of fire is introduced into grosse and terrestriall matter , it is wrested from his owne naturall inclination , and is forced , in steed of ascending , then to descend ; as when wood , iron , earth-coale , and such other terrestriall matter is sett on fire : And it is more or lesse violented from his naturall place , according as the subiect it resideth in ,

hath more or lesse power
 ouer it, and is more or lesse
 materiall : for it sheweth
 more of his leuity and na-
 turall propēſion to aſcend,
 when it ſetteth an oyly, or
 ayery ſubſtance on fire and
 breaketh vp in flames, the
 when meeting with a more
 materiall and terreſtriall ſub-
 ſtance, as wood, it turneth
 it into a coale. Now to ap-
 ply this to our purpoſe, I
 ſay, that of all formes what-
 ſoeuer that are ioyned to
 matter, the nobleſt and
 moſt eleuated aboue the
 foeculency of matter, is
 the ſoule of man: for it is
 not onely the forme of the
 nobleſt materiall creature

that is; but besides that , it is so full of efficacy as it euen ouerfloweth the capacity of matter, which not being able to imbibe (as I may say) and take it vp all, it hath a particular subsistence belōging to it selfe; from whence Philosophers proue the immortality of it. Therefore we may safely conclude that mankinde, in the originall appetences and naturall desires of his soule, is lesse subiect to contingency , and more secure from hauing his nature corrupted and perverted from his due course, then any other materiall creature whatsoeuer is in

the performance of those actions that proceed from the activity of his forme; and so consequently, being considered in generall, proceedeth most certainly and infailibly to the pursuance thereof; and it is impossible it should fall of from its owne nature, and, suffer that to be extinguished in it; although in some particulars, by the immersion in matter and the terrene habitation it dwelleth in, some soule may be drawne or rather wrested to a contrary byas vnto that which originally nature implanted in it. Now the primary originall

naturall appetence of mans
 soule, is the loue of truth;
 which it vehemently desi-
 reth, and is allwayes vn-
 quiet and ardent in the search
 of it vpon what occasion
 soeuer, and is neuer appea-
 sed and at ease, vntill she
 haue found it out; which
 she noe sooner hath done,
 but the violence she was
 in is calmed; she is conten-
 ted; and she settleth her
 selfe to repose, as hauing
 arriued to her center and
 naturall place of rest;
 wherein she continueth
 enioying the purchase
 she hath made, vntill some
 new occasion of disqui-
 sition stir her vp againe; in
 which

which she vseth the same industry and eagernes as before. And thus we plainly see that the acquisition of truth is that which the soule in euery action naturally aymeth at, as fire doth to ascend; and detesteth falsehood, as flames suffer violence to be reuerberated downewards. Therefore, although any particular man may haue his senses or fantasie so depraved as to take imperfect and maymed impressions of outward obiects; or the powers of his vnderstanding so weake as to make preposterous and disorderly collections out of

them; or his iudgement so misguided by preoccupation of any affectiō or particular end, as he may in himselfe be deceiued, and feede his soule with falsehood in steede of truth; or else, that sinister respects and interests, or sordide apprehensions of commodity to himselfe, meeting with à soule so disposed and wrought vpon by the sensuall passions tyrannising ouer it, as to cause him to swallow those baytes, may make him employ the faculties of his vnderstanding and the powers of his soule, contrary vnto their naturall inclination,

to the maintayning of a
lye , and industriously
to deceiue others : yet it
is impossible that all
mankind or such a mul-
titude of men as contayne
in them all the variety of
dispositions and affections
incident to the nature of
man, and that are dispersed
throughout the world, so
as they can haue noe com-
munion together whereby
they might infect one ano-
ther, nor can haue sinister
ends cōmon alike to them
all, which should inuite thē
to conspire together to
forge a falsehood: it is im-
possible (I say) that such
a company of men should

so degenerate from their
 owne nature (which is to
 loue truth) as they should
 of themselves inuent a lye
 (and that in so important
 a matter as faith is) and
 concurre to deceiue the
 world of men that should
 come after them in things
 of such nature, as their de-
 ceipt must of necessity
 damne for all eternity both
 themselves and all them
 that shall receiue that lye
 from them , and take it
 upon their credit : without
 which vnanimous conspi-
 racy of one whole age of
 men throughout all the
 world, we proued in our
 last conclusion that no

false proposition could be admitted into the Church as an article of faith. In a word, this generall defection of all ~~makinde~~ from truth, is more impossible then that all one entire element or any primigeniall nature should absolutely perish or loose its originall proprietie; as for all the fire in the world to be corrupted and forsake his heate and leuity, and so consequently to haue noe more fire in nature: all which followeth of what is sayd aboue. And thus I conceiue I haue made good the assertion that hath begotten all this dis-

course vpon the thirteēth head; which is that faith conserued in the Catho-like Church, and deliue-red by perpetuall successiō and generall' tradition, is more certaine and more infallible then any naturall science whatsoeuer : for naturall sciences being grounded vpon the indefectibility of the natures of those things from whence those sciences are collected; and faith depending vpon the indefectibility of humane nature, which is infinitely more noble then they, and whose forme is eleuated beyond the reach of matter (whereas theirs

iscomprehended and shutt
 vp within the wombe of
 matter and which is in-
 deed the end and period of
 all their natures, and of all
 the whole materiall world)
 It followeth of conse-
 quēce that faith must be
 lesse subiect to contingen-
 cy, and lesse lyable to er-
 ror then naturall sciences
 are. And they being in
 vniuersall infallible and
 certaine; faith must like-
 wise be so too; and more if
 more may be.

But this is not enough.
 our disquisition must not
 rest heere: We must not
 content ourselues in this
 diuine affaire and superna-

turall doctrine with a certitude depending onely vpon naturall causes. The wisedome of God proportioneth out congruent meanes to bring on euery thing to their proper end; and according to the nobility of the effect that he will haue produced, he ordaineth equiualent noble causes. Therefore, mans obtaining beatitude being the highest end that any creature can arriue vnto, and altogether supernaturall; it requireth supernaturall causes to bring vs to that end, and a supernaturall infallibility to secure vs in that iourney. We must

not onely haue a supernaturall way to trauell in (which is faith) but allso a supernaturall assurance of the right way, vnto the discouery of which, all that we haue already sayd, doth necessarily cōduce; for Gods providence that disposeth all things sweetly, will not in any generall affaire introduce into the materiall world any supernaturall effect, vntill the naturall causes be first disposed fittingly to cooperate on their partes; and then he neuer faileth of his. As for example, when a naturall creature is to be produced into beeing, the

father and mother must both concur in contributing all that is in their power to the generation of a child; and yet we are sure the soule to be produced hath no dependance of them; yet notwithstanding, without their precedent action no newe soule would be: But when the matter is fittingly disposed in the mothers wōbe, he neuer misseth creating of a soule in that body; which is as noble an effect, and as much requiring the omnipotency of God, as the creating of nothinge all the materiall world; and yet we may say that the

matter, when it is arrived to its last disposition for the reception of such a forme, may in a manner claime that miraculous action depending of his omnipotency; since for mankinde he created the rest of the materiall world, and therefore there ought to be as certaine and necessary causes for the production of man, as there are for the production of other materiall things, which we see doe seldom misse in any whē the matter is fitly disposed for the reception of their severall formes. And so in like manner we may rationally

conclude , that in this high and supernaturall busynesse of deliuering ouer from hand to hand a supernaturall doctrine to bring mankinde to the end it was created for , he will first haue all the naturall causes fittingly disposed for the secure and infallible performāce of that worke: and then, that he will adde and infuse into them some supernaturall guift whereby to giue them yet further a supernaturall assurance and infallibility ; which they may with an humble confidence in his vnlimited goodesse , expect and claime at his diuine hand ,

when they are reduced to that state as is conuenient for the reception of such a supernaturall giift.

14. Our fourteenth conclusion therefore shall be that God hath giuen to his Church thus composed, the holy Ghost, to confirme it in the true faith, and to preserve it from error, and to illuminate the vnderstanding of it in right discerning the true sense of those Mysteries of faith that are committed to the custody of it, and to worke supernaturall effects of deuotion and sanctitie in that Church. And this I proue thus, Considering that the

doctrine of Christ is practi-
 ticall and aymeth at the
 working of an effect, which
 is the reduction of man-
 kinde to beatitude : and
 that mankinde compre-
 hendeth not onely those
 that liued in that age, when
 he preached , but also all
 other that euer were since,
 or shall be till the end of
 the world: It is apparent
 that to accomplish that
 end, it was necessary Christ
 should so effectually im-
 print his doctrine in their
 hearts whom he deliuered
 it vnto, as it might vpon
 all occasions and at all ty-
 mes, infallibly expresse it
 selfe in action , and in the

deliuey of it ouer from hand to hand , should in vertue and strength of the first operation , produce euer after like effects in all others. Now to haue this compleately performed , it was to be done both by exteriour and by interiour meanes ; proportionable to the senses without , and to the soule within. The outward meanes were the miracles that he wrought, of which himselfe sayeth, *if I had not wrought those workes that no man else euer did, they were not guilty of sinne, but now, they haue no excuse:* (or to this purpose) and he promised the Apo-

stles they should doe greater then those. And that miracles are the proper instruments to plant a new doctrine and faith withall, the Apostle witnesseth when he sayeth that miracles are wrought for the vnfaithfull not for the faithfull, and God himselfe told Moses that he would once doe some prodigy in his fauour that the people might for euer after belieue what he sayd to them. But it is manifest by the fall of the Apostles themselues, that onely this exteriour meanes of miracles is not sufficient to engraft supernaturall faith
deepe

deepe enough in mens hearts, when as they vpon Christs Passion, not onely for feare, through humane frailty, denyed their master, but had euen the very conceit and beliefe of his doctrine exiled out of their hearts and vnderstanding, notwithstanding all the miracles they had seene him worke in almost 4. yeares tyme they continually cōuersed with him: which appeareth plainly by the discourse of the disciples going to Emaus, when they sayed *we hoped,* &c. And expressed their sadnesse for the contrary successe to their expecta-

tion; and by saint Thomas his saying that he would not belieue his resurrectiō vnlesse he saw him and pnt his fingers into his woundes &c. And by the rest of the Apostles that were so long before they would belieue his resurrection, as hauing giuen ouer the thought of his diuinity, and after his death considered him but as a pure man like other mē. Therefore it was necessary that some inward light should be giuen them, so cleare, and so strōg, and so powerfull, as the senses should not be able to preuaile against it, but that it should

onerflowingly possessed
 fill all their vnderstand-
 ings and their soules, and
 make them breake out in
 exterior actions corres-
 pondent to the spirit that
 steered them within. And
 the reason is euident: for
 whiles on the one side the
 senses discerne, apparant-
 ly, miracles wrought in
 confirmation of a doc-
 trine, and on the other side,
 the same senses doe stiffly
 contradict the very possi-
 bility of the doctrine
 which those miracles te-
 stifye; the soule within,
 hauing no assistāce beyond
 the naturall powers she
 hath belonging originally

vnto her, is in great debate
and anxiety which way to
giue her assent; and though
reason doe preuaile to giue
it to the party of the pre-
sent miracles, yet it is with
great timidity. But if it
happen that the course of
those miracles be stopped;
thē the particular seeming
impossibilities of the propo-
sed faith remayning al-
wayes alike liuely in their
apprehension, and the mi-
racles wrought to con-
firme it residing but in the
memory, and the represen-
tatiōs of them wearing out
dayly more and more, and
the present senses and fan-
tasy growing proportiona-

bly stronger and stronger,
 and withall obiecing
 continually new doubts
 about the reality of those
 miracles, it cannot be ex-
 pected otherwise but that
 the assent of the soule
 should range it selfe on the
 side of the impossibilities
 appearing to the present
 senses, and renounce the
 doctrine formerly confir-
 med by miracles, vnlesse
 some inward and superna-
 turall light be giuen her to
 disperse all the mists that
 the senses rayse against the
 truth of the doctrine. Now
 the infusion of this light
 and feruour, we call the
 giuing of the holy Ghost,

which Christ himfelfe
foreknowing how neces-
fary it was, promifed them,
affuring the that he would
procure his father to fend
them the Holy Ghost,
the Spirit of truth, that
should for ever remaine
among them, and within
them, and fuffest vnto
their memory and instruct
them in the right vnder-
ftanding of the faith he had
preached vnto them. And
this was prophesied long
before, of the state of the
law of grace by Hieremy,
whose authority S. Paule
bringeth to proue that the
law of the Gospell was to
be written by the holy

Ghost in mens hearts and
 in their mindes , and ac-
 cordingly , he calleth
 the faithfull of the Co-
 rinthians, *the faith of Christ*
not written with inke , but
with the spirit of God ; nor
grauen in stony tables , but in
the fleshyones of their hearts.
 And in performance of
 this prophesy and of
 Christs promise , the hy-
 storic telleth vs that on the
 tenth day after the ascen-
 sion of Christ , when all
 his disciples (who were
 then all his Church , and
 were to preach and deliuer
 it to all the world) were
 assembled together , the
 holy Ghost was giuen thē;

and that, in so full a measure, as they not onely were confirmed so perfectly in their faith as they neuer after admitted the least vacillation therein, but they immediatly, casting away all other desires and thoughts, were inflamed with admirable loue of God, and broke out into his prayſes, and into a vehement ardor of teaching and conuerting others; and when, by reason of that zeale of theirs, any thing happened to them contrary to flesh and blood, and humane nature (as persecutions, ignominies, corporall punishmēts, and euen

death it selfe) they not
 onely not shunned it , as
 before , but greedily rann
 to meete and embrace it ,
 and ioyed, and gloryed in
 it : all which were effects
 of the holy Ghost residing
 in them , and filling their
 myndes, and gouerning
 their soules. Where vppō,
 by the way we may note,
 that in what Church so-
 euer we find not à state of
 life for sanctitie and neere
 vnion with God , and con-
 tempt of wordly and tran-
 sitory things, rayfed aboue
 the pitch of nature and
 morality , we may con-
 clude the holy Ghost inha-
 biteth not there : for euery

agent produceth effects proportionable to the dignity of it, and the excellency of any cause, shineth eminently in the noblenesse of its effects. Now that this guift of the holy Ghost is to remaine with the Church as long as the Church remaineth, to illuminate it with the spirit of truth, and to giue it a supernaturall and diuine vñction, will appeare manifestly vpon consideration of the cause why the holy Ghost was to be giuen at the first, which remaineth alwayes the same, and therefore the same effect must alwayes follow: and ac-

cordingly, Christ promised his Church vpon his ascending into heauen, that he would alwayes remaine with them vntill the end of the world, to witt, by this holy spirit; for he was then at the point of withdrawing his corporall presence from them.

15. Our next conclusion shall be that this Church or congregation of men spread ouer the world, conseruing and deliuering the faith of Christ from hand to hand, is euen in its owne nature perpetuall in tyme, and cannot faile as long as mankinde remayneth in

the world. This needeth
 noe further prooffe then
 that which we haue already
 made; which is deriued
 from the necessity of ſu-
 pernaturall faith to bring
 mankind to the end it was
 created for, and that there
 is no meanes to deliuer this
 faith to mankind in the
 ages after Chriſt, but by
 the traditiō of the Church;
 and therefore as long as
 mankind laſteth, this
 meanes muſt be cōtinued.
 Yet in this way of reaſo-
 ning that I uſe, we are to
 examine our concluſions
 as well by the genuine
 and orderly cauſes that be-
 get them, and by their

owne particular principles,
 as to assent vnto them for
 the necessity that we see in
 them in regarde of the end
 that they are referred
 vnto : And when we haue
 retriued those, and euident-
 ly discerned their force,
 it giueth an admirable con-
 tent and satisfaction to the
 vnderstanding. Thus then:
 as Philosophers conclude
 that it is impossible any
 whole species or kinde of
 beastes should euer be vt-
 terly exterminated and
 destroyed, that is diffused
 vp and downe ouer the
 whole face of the earth,
 because the amplitude of
 the vniuerse is greater then

the variety of causes can be from which such a generall and entire corruption must proceed: In like manner we may confidently conclude, that it is impossible any depraved affections should so vniuersally preuaile, and so absolutely raigne in mens mindes throughout the whole world, as would be requisite to extirpate and roote out a doctrine vniuersally spread ouer it all, that was at the first taught and confirmed with such scales of truth as the miracles that Christ and the Apostles wrought, that in it selfe is so pure and agreable to the

feedes that euery man findeth sowed, euen by nature, in his owne soule; that worketh such admirable effects as the reformation of manners in mākind; that withdraweth mens affections from humane and wordly contentments, and carryeth them with a sweete violence to intellectuall objects, and to hopes of immortality and happinesse in another life; that prescribeth lawes for happy liuing, euen in this world, to all men of what condition soeuer, ether publike or priuate, as working a moderation in mens affections to the

commodities and goods of this life, which else in nature is apt to blinde mens mindes, and is the cause of all michiefes and euills; and lastly, that is deliuered ouer from hand to hand, from worlds of fathers to worlds of sonnes, with such care and exactnesse as greater cānot be imagined, and as is requisite to the importance of that affaire; which is infinitely beyond all others, as on which the saluation and damnation of mankinde wholly dependeth. Now, vnto these rationall considerations let vs adde the promise which Christ made

made to his Church, that the gates of hell should not preuaile against it ; and I thinke we haue sufficiently maintained that the Church of Christ in which the true doctrine of Christ is conserued, can neuer faile, but must infallibly continue vntill the worlds end. Thus hauing proued, that a supernaturall doctrine is necessary to bring mankind to beatitude; that Christ taught this doctrine ; that from him the Church receaued it, and is the sacrary in which it is cōserued; that this Church cannot erre in the tradition of this doctrine, that be-

sides the infallibility of it, this Church is perpetuall. It remaineth now that we close vp this discourse by applying all these premises vnto the question in hand; which is, where we shall find out this infallible Church, that by it we may gaine the knowledge of the true faith of Christ, whereby we are to be saved.

16. For this end our sixteenth and last conclusion shall be, that the congregation of men spread ouer the world, ioyning in communion with the Church of Rome, is the true Catholike Church

in which is conserued and taught the true sauing faith of Christ.

The truth of this conclusion will without bringing any new proofes appeare euidently by reflecting vpon what we haue sayed, and onely examining whether the Romane Church be such a one as we haue determined the true Church of Christ must be; or whether the notes which me may inferre out of our discourse to belong inseparably to the true Church, may not rather with more reason be acknowledged of some other then of that in cōmunion

with the see of Rome?
this point after these
groundes layed, requireth
no very subtill disquisition,
but is discernable euen by
the weakest sights : and
therefore this way of argu-
ing appeareth to me most
satisfactory and content-
full , when taking the
whole body of the que-
stion into suruey ; and be-
ginning with the first and
remotest considerations of
it , we driue the difficulties
still before vs ; and pursu-
ing of them orderly , at
euery steppe we establish
a solide principle , and so
become secure of the truth
and certainty of all we

leauē behind vs ; which
course , although it may at
the first sight appeare to be
a great way about , and
looking but superficially
vpon the matter we may
seeme to meete with diffi-
culties which cōcerne not
our question; yet in the ef-
fect we shall perceiue it is
the most summary me-
thod of handling any con-
trouersie ; and the onely
meanes to be secured of
the truth of what we con-
clude, and that will recom-
pense the precedent diffi-
culties by making the
conclusion (which is the
knotte of the affayre)
plaine , easy , and open. I

say then first that vnity of doctrine in matters of faith is inseparable from the Romane Church, and can neuer be found in any other: it onely, hauing a precise and determinate rule of faith. For it hath believed in euery age, all that hath bin plainly and positively taught vnto it by theire fathers as the doctrine of faith deriued from Christ; and admitteth noe other article whatsoever as an article of faith. Whereas on the other side, all other Christian Churches among vs that pretend reformation, haueing no certaine and common rule of faith,

but every particular man governing himselfe in this matter by the collections of his owne braine, and by his owne priuate vnderstanding and interpretation of Scripture (which onely he acknowledgeth as the entire rule of faith) it must consequently follow, that according to the variety of their tempers and iudgemēts, there must be a variety and difference of their opinions and beliefs; which difference of temper happening for the most part betweene every two men that are, it likewise followeth scarce any two should in all particu-

lars of their opinions agree together. And accordingly we see by experience, that scarce any two authors, out of the Romane Church, that haue written of matters of faith haue agreed in their tenets, but rather haue dissented in fundamentall doctrine, and haue inueighed against one another in their writings with great vehemence and bitterness. Whereas on the other side, the Doctors of the Romane Church in all tymes, in all places, and of all tempers haue agreed vnanimously in all matters of faith; although in the meanetyme, seuerall

of them haue, in diuers other points great debates against one another, and pursue them with much sharpnesse: which strongly confirmeth the ground vpon which we framethis obseruation.

But to insist a little further vpon this material and important consideration; it is euident that the proceeding of the reformers openeth the gate to all dissention, schisme, irreuerence, pride of vnderstanding, heresie, and ruine of Christian religion: for to iustify the new births of their rebellions braines, the first stroke of their pen

must be to lay a taint of ignorance and error vpon the whole current of Ancient fathers and Doctours of the Church, and generall Councells, and to blast their authority which is so precisely contrary to their doctrine; whose names and recordes ought to be sacred with posterity. Which when they haue done; to settle a constant and like beliefe in all men, they giue noe generall and certayne rule; but leauing euery man to the Dictamens of his owne priuate iudgement, according to the seuerall tempers and circumstances (as we sayd

before) that sway euery single man in particular, there must result (which we see by experience) as great a variety of opinions as those are different. And lastly since they quarell at Catholickes beliefe in those points where they differ from them, because they captiuate their vnderstandings with reuerence to what the Church proposeth and teacheth, and thereby admitt into their beliefe articles which may seeme absurd to common sense ; they may as well with presumptuous hands, graspe at and seeke to plucke vp, the very fun-

dations of Christian religion; as namely the doctrine of the Trinity, and of the incarnation of Christ, and of the resurrection and state of life of the future world : since there are greater seeming contradictions in them (especially in the two first) then in those misteryes the reformers cauill at.

In the next place we may consider that as infallibility is pretended by the Romane Church alone, so it is apparantly entayled vpon it: for we haue proued that no meanes or circumstance, ether morall, naturall or supernaturall, is wanting

in it to begett infallibility
in matters of faith. Whereas
on the other side, from
the reformers owne position
we inferre by consequence
that their doctrine cannot
be hoped (euen by theſelues)
to be infallible; and therefore
they that shall submit their
vnderstanding to their conduct,
though they belieue without
controuersy all they say,
must needes (euen by reason
of what is taught them)
floate allwayes in a greate
deale of incertitude and
anxious apprehension and
feare of error. For they
looking vpon the Church,
but with pure

humane considerations as an ordinary company of men, will haue it lyable to mistaking according to the naturall imbecillity of mens wits and vnderstandings, and of humane passions, and negligence and other such defects and weakenesses which euery man is by nature subiect vnto: Against which they produce no antidote to preserve and secure themselves from the infectiō and taint they lay vpon the Church. For, if they will haue the conferences of seuerall passages of Scripture to be that which must giue light in the seuerall cōtrouerted

obscurities; what eminency haue these few late reformers shewne, ether in knowledge of tongues, insight into antiquity, profoundnesse in sciēces, and perfection and sanctity of life, which hath not shined admirably more (not to taxe them here of the contrary) in multitudes of the aduerse party? And none will deny but these are the likelyest meanes to gaine à right intelligence of the true and deepe sense of Scriptures. And besides, we may obserue that the reason why they deny the seuerall articles wherein they differ from the Ca-

tholicke Church, is because it teacheth a doctrine which is repugnant to sense and of hard digestion to Philosophy ; both which are vncompetent iudges of diuine and supernaturall truths : And whosoever steereth by their compasse, cannot hope for infallibility in a matter that transcendeth their reach.

Thirdly we may consider that the vniuersality of the Church in regarde of place (which is necessary to the end that all mankind may haue sufficient meanes to gaine knowledge of the true faith) can be attributed to none but
to

to the Romane Catho-
licke Church; which one-
ly is diffused throughout
the whole world; whereas
all others are circled in
with narrow limits of parti-
cular prouinces; And euen
within them, the profes-
sors scarce agree among
themselues in any poynt of
doctrine but in opposing
the Romane Church.

And yet further; besides
this want of vniuersality
in regarde of place; the
Religion taught by the re-
formers, hath yet a greater
restriction then that: for
euen in its owne nature, it
is not for all sorts of per-
sons and for all capacities:

H

whereas the true saueing
faith to bring men to bea-
titude ought to be obuius
to all mankinde, and open
as well to the simple as to
the learned. For since they
lay the Scriptures as the
first and highest principle,
from whence they deduce
all that ought to be belie-
ued; And that in all artes
and sciences the primary
and fundamentall princi-
ples thereof ought to be
thoroughly knowne by the
that aspire to the perfect
knowledge of those scien-
ces; it followeth that one
must haue an exact know-
ledge of the learned tong-
ues to examine punctually

the true sense of the Scriptures; and that one must be perfectly versed in logicke to be able to reason solidly, and to deduce true consequences from certaine principles (for want of which, we find by experience that great controuersies arise dayly among the learnedst men; which would not be, if the force of consequences were of their owne nature easily discernable) and one must be thoroughly skilled in naturall philosophy and Metaphysickes, since vnto appearing contradictions in subiects of those sciences, they reduce most of their argu-

ments against the supernaturall truths that Catholickes belieue. And lastly one must be indowed with an excellent iudgemēt and strong naturall witt, to be able to wield and make good vse of these weapons; without which they would but aduāce him the faster to ruine and pernicious error. With which excellencies, how few are there in the world fairely adorned?

Fourthly, it is euident that the Romane Catholicke Church onely hath had a constant and vninterrupted succession of Pastors and Doctors, and tradition of doctrine from age to age; which we

haue established as the one-
 ly meanes to deriue downe
 the true faith from Christ.
 Whereas it is apparant all
 others haue had late be-
 ginnings from vnworthy
 causes: And yet, euen in this
 little while, haue not bene
 able to maintaine themsel-
 ues for one age through-
 out (or scarce for any con-
 siderable part of an age)
 in one tenor of doctrine,
 or forme of Ecclesiasticall
 gouernment. Lastly we may
 consider how the effect of
 the holy Ghost his inha-
 biting in the Church, in
 regard of manners, mak-
 ing the hearts of men his
 liuing temples, shineth

eminently in the Catho-
like Church, and is not so
much as to be suspected in
any other whatsoeuer. For
where this holy spirit
raigneth, it giueth a bur-
ning loue of God (as we
haue touched before) and
a vehement desire of ap-
proaching vnto him as
neere as may be : Now,
the soule of man, moueth
towards God not by cor-
poreall steppes and pro-
gressions, but by intellec-
tuall actions; the highest of
which, are mentall prayer
and contēplation; in which
exercices, a man shall ad-
uance the more, by how
much he is the more se-

questred from the thought
 and care of any wordly af-
 fayres, and hath his pas-
 sions quieted within him,
 and is abstracted from cō-
 munication with materiall
 obiects, and is vntied from
 humane interests, and (ac-
 cording to the counsailes
 of Christ in the Gospell)
 hath cast off all sollicitude
 of the future, and remitteth
 himselfe wholly to the pro-
 uidence of God, liuing in
 the world as though he
 were not in it, wholly in-
 tent to contēplation when
 the inferiour part of Cha-
 rity calleth him not downe
 to comply with the neces-
 sity of his Neighbours.

H iij

This forme of life we see continually practised in the Catholicke Church by multitudes of persons of both sexes, that through extreme desire of approaching as neere vnto God as this life will permitt, doe banish themselves from all theyr friends, kindred, and what els in the world was naturally dearest vnto the; and either retire into extreme solitudes, or shutt themselves vp for euer within the narrow limits of a straight Monastery and little cell; where hauing renounced all the interest and propriety in the

goods of this world, and
 vsing no more of them then
 is necessary for the poore
 sustenance of theyr ex-
 hausted bodyes (which
 they mortify with great
 abstinences, watchings and
 other austerities, that they
 may bring them into sub-
 iection; and roote out, as
 much as may bee, the very
 fewell of concupiscence
 and passions) and hauing
 of their owne accorde bar-
 red themselves of all pro-
 priety of disposing of the-
 selues in any action, and
 renounced euen the free-
 dome of their will; and
 thus in somme, hauing ta-
 ken an eternall farewell of

all the ioyes and delights
 that this world can afford,
 and that carnall mē would
 be so loath to forgoe for
 any litle while; yet by the
 internall ioyes that they
 find in their prayer and cō-
 templation (vnto which
 all these actions of retren-
 chment from superfluities,
 or outward solaces., doe
 serue; as a ladder to ascend
 vnto the topp of it) they
 liue so happily, and cheer-
 fully, and with such tran-
 quillity of minde, and vpon
 occasions say so much of
 the ouerflowings of theyr
 blisse, as it is apparant they
 inioy there the hundred-
 fold that Christ promised

in this life. Nor can it be objected that men vsually betake themselues to this course of Religious life, vpon being distempered by melancholy, or for the ill successe and trauerses they haue had in affayres of the world, or out of simplicitie and weakenesse of vnderstanding; since it is euident that this Angelicall forme of liuing hath euer beene best practised by persons of the best composed and cheerfullest dispositions; and by multitudes of such is and hath bene imbraced; and that in the world overflowed with all the blessings it

could afford them; and were of strongest parts of vnderstanding and iudgement; and were most eminent in learning. So that it is apparent they had no other motiue thereunto, but purely the loue of God and seruour of deuotion: which being an effect of the holy Ghost residing in their heartes; to his inspirations and admirable wayes of working in those his temples of flesh and blood, these extraordinary effects are to be imputed. Whereas on the other side noe such exāples or surpernaturall forme of life, are to be mett withall

in any other Church whatsoever : Rather , they dis-
 claime from them ; and like
 men of this world (which
 is the expression that Christ
 vseth in the Gospell to de-
 signe those that are not of
 his Church) not being able
 to discerne things of the
 spiritt , but being blinded
 with the luster of them ,
 too great for their weake
 eyes ; they neglect and dis-
 dayne them , and imagine
 that all Christian perfec-
 tion consisteth in an ordi-
 nary humane morall life :
 which is the vttermost pe-
 riode that any among them
 seeke to attaine vnto. And
 therefore we may hence

cōclude that they haue no
interiour worker among
them more sublime then
their owne humane dis-
courses and iudgements;
and that supernaturall sāc-
tity (an effect of the holy
Ghost) is confined only to
the Catholicke Church.

Besides; we may obserue
by dayly experience, how
those persons that addict
thēselues to such an extra-
ordinary way of life; doe ab-
solutly proue ether the best
or the worst of mankind;
the one excelling in ad-
mirable piety, seruour of
denotion, abstraction and
sanctity of life, and some
of them soaring vp to a

pitch euen aboue nature;
the other abounding in all
sorts of impiety, wicked-
nesse and dissolution of
manners , till at length
theire hearts become euen
hardened against correc-
tion and all sense of spiri-
tuall things; whereas it or-
dinarily happeneth that
the most flagitious men a-
mong those who liue in
a vulgar wordly estate of
life, doe vpon occasions
frequently receaue nota-
ble impressions from di-
uine obiects to the amen-
dement and change of
their dissolute course. And
this being a constant and
certaine effect noted at all

tymes and in all places, it
 must be attributed to a cō-
 stant and powerfull cause:
 which can be noe other
 thē the neere approaching
 of those persons to the ori-
 ginall fontaine of sainctity
 and goodnesse; which
 being like a consuming
 fire, worketh vehement
 effects in them, accord-
 ing to the disposition they
 are in, and to the neerenes
 that they haue vnto that
 fire: so that as the sunne
 beames (which are the
 authors of life and fœcun-
 dity to all plants and vege-
 tables) shinning vpon
 a tree that hath taken so-
 ide rootes in the earth,
 maketh

it budd, flourish, and beare fruit, and on the other side, if it bee weakely rooted, their heate and operation vpon that tree maketh it the sooner to wither and die: And as the fyre sendeth an influence of heate into a pott of water that is simply applyed vnto it, but if that pott be sett in a vessell of snow or ice, and so be held ouer the fire, it driueth vnto the center the cold of the snowe formerly diffused without, and in a very short space turneth that water into ice, which else might haue stayed there long enough without congealing: in like manner,

they who being rooted in charity, approach to that diuine sunne, doe flourish and bring fourth excellent and oft tymes supernaturall fruites of deuotion, feruor, and sanctitye; butt those who haue depraued affections soe inuironing the rootes of theyr hearts as that the soyle of charity cānott introduce her nourishing sappe into them; and whose soules are compassed in with the ice of sensuality and carnall cogitations; if they come within the beames of this holy sunne, or within the heate of this sanctifying fire, they doe but wither

away the sooner, and their hearts grow daily more and more to be ice, till at length (like that of Pharao, amidst the wonderful workes of the lord, happy to others) they become miserable and stony.

And againe we see that those who hauing addicted themselves wholly to such a course of Seraphycall life, and that being allwayes vehemently intent to the loue and contemplation of the prime verity, and that hauing no other obiekt for their actions or thoughts; doe thereby (as wee may reasonably conceaue) approach neereſt to God all-

mighty and drawe immediately from him (who is the fontaine of light and truth) strongest emanations and cleereſt influences to illustrate their vnderſtanding, and enflame their affections: thoſe perſons (.I ſay) haue ever beene moſt earneſt in the maintenāce of thoſe points of the Romane doctrine which are moſt repugnant to ſenſe (as in particular, of that of the reall preſence of Chriſts body in the bleſſed Sacrement; vnto which all other Sacraments, and acts of faith and deuotion, are reduced) and adore them with grea;

test reuerence, and are en-
 flamed with feruentest de-
 uotion vnto them. And
 therefore wee may con-
 clude that this confidence,
 religiousnesse, and feruour,
 proceedeth from hēce that
 these men, and such among
 them as cannot be suspec-
 ted for simplicity, igno-
 rance, or sinister ends; are
 thus cōfirmed in this faith,
 and are thus sett on fire
 with this deuotion more
 vigorously and vehemētly
 then ordinary secular men;
 by the immediate working
 and inspiration of the holy
 Ghost; from whose strea-
 mes it is likely they drinke
 purer and cleerer waters,

and neerer the well head,
then other men of a more
worldly and vulgar con-
uersation. And it were not
agreeable to the goodnesse
of God to permitt those
persons that most affec-
tionately seeke him, and
who for his sake, out of
pure deuotion and desire of
contemplating truth, doe
abridge themselues of all
other wordly contentmēts,
to haue theyr vnderstand-
ings worse blynded with
false doctrine then other
men that seeke him more
coldly and care lesse for
him; and to haue their wills
more depraued then theirs
with erroneous and false

deuotion, as of necessity it
 would follow theyrs were,
 if the doctrine that the Ca-
 tholicke Church profes-
 seth were not true, and the
 holy Ghost resided not in
 it to worke those effects.
 Now on the contrary
 part, lett vs make a short
 inquiry whether it be pro-
 bable that the late preten-
 ded reformers haue beene
 illuminated by God in an
 extraordinary manner, to
 discouer truth ; which
 they say hath for many
 ages layen hidd. Surely if
 any such thing were, they
 would haue expressed in
 theyre manner of life by
 some extraordinary sancti-

ty and excellent actions,
and supernaturall wis-
dome, that extraordinary
cōmunication which they
would persuade vs they
had with the diuinity. For
as by a radiant beame of
light shining in at the
chinke of a window, wee
know assuredly, the sunne
beateth vpon it, although
we see not his body; soe
likewise there should haue
broken out frō them some
admirable and excellent
effect whereby wee might
rest confident that the di-
uine sunne illuminated
theire vnderstanding, and
enflamed theyre will.
Moyse when hee came

downe from the mountayne where hee soe long conuerſed with God, expreſſed euen by the luſter glittering from his face, that it was not an ordinary or naturall light which had ſhined vnto him: the Apoſtles when they were replenished with the holy Ghoſt receiued immediately the giſt of tongues and a cleere intelligence of all the Scriptures; whereby they made cleare vnto the auditors the obſcureſt paſſages of them; and continually wrought miracles: and all thoſe that euer ſince them haue introduced the Goſpell into any

country where formerly it was not receaued, haue still had thyre commission auctorised by the same seales; and shall our late particular Reformers be credited in theyr pretended vocation, and in theyr new doctrine that shaketh the very foundations of the faith that hath beene by the whole Christian world for soe many ages believed and deliuered ouer from hand to hand, when as nothing appeareth in them supernaturall and proceeding from a diuine cause?

This Madame, is as much as I shall trouble your La: withall vpon this

occasion : which indeed is much more then at the first I intended or could haue suspected my pen would haue stollen from mee. The substance of all which may be summed vp and reduced to this following short question ; namely, whether in the election of the faith whereby you hope to be saued, you will be guided by the vnanimous consent of the wisest, the learnedst, and the piou-
sest men of the whole world, that haue bene instructed in what they be-
lieue by men of the like quality living in the age before them, and soe from

age to age vntill the Apostles and Christ; and that in this manner haue deriued from that fountayne, both a perfect and full knowledge of all that ought to be believed, and likewise a right vnderstanding and interpretation of the Scriptures, as farr as concerneth faith; (the true sense of which so farr, is alsoe deliuered ouer by the same tradition.) Or whether you wil assent vnto the new and wrested interpretations of places of Scripture, made by late men that rely meere-ly vpon their single iudgement and witt (too slight a barcke to sayle in

III.

through foe immense an Ocean) and whose chiefe leaders for humane respects and sinister ends (not to say worse of them) made a desperate defection from the other maine body; since which tyme; noe two of them haue agreed in doctrine; and among whom it is impossible your lady-shippes greate iudgement and strong vnderstanding should finde any solide stay to repose securely vpon, and to quiett all those rationall doubts that your perceiving wit suggesteth vnto you. And here, madame, I shall make an end; haeuing sincerely, and as suc-

cinctly and playnely as I
 can deliuered you the
 chiefe considerations that
 in this affayre turned the
 scale of the balance with
 mee; which in good faith I
 haue done with all the sim-
 plicity and ingenuity that
 I can expresse my sense
 with; being not at all war-
 med with any passion or
 partiality, nor rayfed out
 of my euē pitch and tem-
 per with any spirit of dis-
 putation, or siding humor;
 (which few haue auoyded
 vpon this subiect) but I
 haue giuen you a true pic-
 ture of my seriousest and
 saddest thoughts and reso-
 lutions to my selfe in this

most important busynesse;
 wherein you will belieue
 I would take the greatest
 paines I was able, to be
 sure not to be deceiued. I
 haue not sought to show
 wittinesse or acutenesse of
 learning in the debating of
 these points; or haue affec-
 ted polished langage in the
 committing them to pa-
 per; for this matter should
 not be handled for osten-
 tation but for vse: and
 though peraduenture if this
 discourse should fall into
 the view of some learned
 man hee may at the first
 sight sett but a slight vlew
 vpon it; yett I perswade

my selfe whosoever he
 be if hee will ponder it se-
 riously and leasurely and
 with a like interior recol-
 lectiō as I at the first settled
 the grounds of it in my
 owne soule, he will then
 finde it toucheth the life of
 the matter : and though I
 haue not deliured my con-
 ceptions smoothly and
 well, yett hee will not
 thinke his tyme lost in
 reading them; and hauing
 stronger parts then I, hee
 will make cleerer vse of
 them then I haue done.
 This I am sure of; that all-
 though I haue sett this
 downe for your La : in 2.

or

or 3. dayes (for it is noe longer since you commanded me to doe it) yet it is the production and result of many howers meditations by my selfe; or rather of some yeares : and how drye soeuer they may appeare to your La : at the first; yet I dare promise you that vpon your secōd and third readings and reflexions vpon them , they will gaine more credit with you ; and you will (I know) by such application of your thoughts vpon them , enlarge and refine what dependeth of the maine heads far be-

K

yond any thing I have
 sayd. For such is the na-
 ture of notions that are
 wrought, like the silke
 wormes ball, of ones owne
 substance: they afford fine
 and strong threads for a
 good workman to weaue
 into a fayre peece of stuffe:
 whereas they that like
 bees doe gather hony
 from seuerall authors;
 or that like Aunts, doe
 make vp their store by
 what they picke vp in the
 originall cude substance
 from others labours; may
 peraduenture in their
 workes seeme more plea-
 sant at the first taste, or ap-

peare to haue a fayrer
heape at the first view, but
the others webb is more
vsfull, more substantiall,
and more durable.

I beseech God of his
grace and goodnesse, in
this life to enlighten your
La : vnderstanding that
you may discerne truth,
and to dispose your will
that you may imbrace it;
and in the next , to giue
you part among those
glorious Apostles, Fathers,
Doctors, and Martyrs that
deriuing the same truth
from him, haue from hand
to hand deliuered it ouer
to our tymes.

F I N I S.